United Nations

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General tells correspondents of ongoing discussions in Baghdad between his Executive Delegate and Iraqi authorities on armed United Nations presence in Iraq.

- Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator calls for increased contributions through United Nations system to fund critical needs in Persian Gulf.

- Secretary-General's Personal Representative on Afghanistan expresses encouragement by outcome of talks with parties concerned with Afghan question.

- Disarmament Commission concludes annual session, under a new streamlined work plan, focusing this year on exchange of objective information on military matters; nuclear disarmament, regional approaches to disarmament: role of science and technology in international security.

- Issues of poverty, disparities between North and South, needs of disabled, crime prevention are highlighted by speakers in Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar this afternoon briefed correspondents about the proposed United Nations protection of Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq.

In reply to questions by correspondents, he said his Executive Delegate for Humanitarian Assistance in Kuwait and Iraq, Sadruddin Aga Khan, on his behalf had discussed with the Iraqi authorities the possibility of a United Nations armed presence which could "in some way encourage the Kurds to go back to their homes". However, he said, it was still too early to talk about an agreement.

Asked if there was a relationship between Iraq's agreeing to an arrangement with military personnel and the possibility of easing the

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sanctions, the Secretary-General replied that if there was rapid progress as far as implementation of the Security Council resolutions were concerned, it would only be logical that the Council started considering the lifting of sanctions.

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The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator has issued a report stating the financial aspects of the United Nations humanitarian action in the Gulf region.

The report, issued yesterday, stated that the total funds contributed for relief to the affected region from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) system amounted to some $300 million. That amount had increased by $88.5 million since the last financial report of 3 May.

The funding through the United Nations system, however, did not increase significantly during that period of time, according to UNDRO. Contributions to UNDRO in response to the appeal for $400.2 million last month for the plan of action for the region only amounted to $103 million. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had received some $67 million, the report stated.

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The Secretary-General's Spokesman said today that Mr. Perez de Cuellar's Personal Representative on Afghanistan, Benon Sevan, had been continuing his consultations with all parties concerned with the Afghan question. Mr. Sevan had expressed encouragement by the outcome of the talks.

The Spokesman said Mr. Sevan had met today in separate meetings with Pakistan's Foreign Secretary and with leaders of a number of political parties of the resistance groups based in Peshawar.

He said that after a day of meetings on 12 May with senior officials of the Pakistani Foreign Ministry, Mr. Sevan had returned to Peshawar and had met with a group of leading commanders of the resistance.

Mr. Sevan would be returning to Peshawar tomorrow for further meetings, and would go to Kabul over the weekend before returning to New York next week.

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The Disarmament Commission yesterday concluded its three-week session during which it had discussed issues such as openness and transparency on all military matters, the relationship between nuclear disarmament and international peace and security and regional disarmament. It had also examined the impact of scientific and technological developments on international security. The Commission made recommendations on these subjects, which are contained in its report to the General Assembly.

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The topics on the Commission's agenda this year reflected an effort to facilitate the Commission's work by focusing attention on four specific issues. The debate on each question is limited to three years, with four Working Groups assigned to hold informal talks on the selected topics.

The Chairman of the Commission, Peter Hohenfellner (Austria), in a closing statement, said the Commission for the first time had been working under its new organizational framework, and the reorganization process would continue in coming years.

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The end of the cold war, which had raised hopes of increasing the financial flows to developing countries, had instead widened the gap between North and South, speakers stressed this morning as the Economic and Social Council's Committee dealing with social issues continued its debate of the world social situation and social development.

Issues such as the eradication of poverty, disparities between North and South and with the needs of the disabled were highlighted as challenges which must be met to improve the world social situation. A call for a sharply focused United Nations programme for crime prevention and criminal justice was also heard.

Yesterday, the Committee heard a proposal to convene a World Summit for Social Development with a focus on the human being.

The proposal was made in a statement by the Committee Chairman, Juan Somavia of Chile, who stressed that for the vast majority of the Earth's inhabitants, the source of insecurity lay in inadequate social development.

World peace could only be reached through "social peace", which he said could only be brought about through human development and sustained growth. There was a need to move towards an integrated idea of security by which a modern concept of "human security" would be developed, he said.

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CORRECTION: In Monday's Daily Highlights (Press Release DH/888 of 13 May), the last paragraph should read as follows: In a report dated 10 May, the agency said Sadruddin Aga Khan would present to the participants a revised plan of action for the region which would provide the framework for integrating actions already under way. Current efforts entailed in two separate plans cover countries neighbouring Iraq and Iraq itself.